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ABSTRACT

In this address, statistical data from the Ethiopian National Census (1984) and a brief account of the development of the nation from feudal rule to democratic republic are followed by a discussion of characteristics of the modern Ethiopian state. Particular attention is given to the administrative apparatus, multiethnic composition, sociocultural dimensions, and living conditions in Ethiopia. Living conditions in rural areas and their implications for rural development are delineated. Rural development, the main concern of the address, is discussed in terms of gender differences and the role of education. Concluding remarks concern the challenge that rural development presents to educators. A total of 48 references are cited. (RH)

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CULTURE, GENDER AND EDUCATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON ETHIOPIA

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CULTURE, GENDER AND EDUCATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON ETHIOPIA.

Background.

Ethiopia is a country which has been much in focus during the last decades, and is indeed a country with a fascinating history and culture. It has been in focus for many studies concerning different disciplines, such as history (e.g. by Pankhurst S., 1955; Pankhurst R., 1968 et cetera; Rubenson, 1976, 1984 and others), politics (Markakis, 1975; Markakis et Ayele, 1978; Ayele, 1983; Schwab, 1985 et cetera) and religion (Aren, 1978; Tamrat, 1972; Bakke, 1986 et cetera). The Pankhursts (Sylvia, Richard, Rita, Alula) have presented much material, which gives a clear historical background to Ethiopian history. Schwab has described political conditions after the revolution and during the leadership of the Dergue, synonymous with PMAC (Provisional Military Administrative Committee). His study gives a thorough background of events from 1974 to approximately 1984. Statistical background data, though, have to be handled with carefully, as they refer to conditions before the National Census (CSO, 1984). Some figures from this census will be presented below.

Population.

Current population is estimated at 45,958,716 (for 1986) of which 22,960,290 are males and 22,998,426 females (CSO, 1985 and WPE, 1987). Rural population was at the same time 41,105,484 and urban population was 4,853,232 (CSO, 1985). Projections for 1995 forecast a total population of 58,061,018, with 28,984,093 males and 29,076,925 females, and a rural population of 51,372,393 and an urban population of 6,688,625 (CSO, 1985). Regional and provincial statistics are left aside in this paper, as they are adjusted at present in accordance with the new administrative apparatus (below).

Crude birth rates were in 1984: 46.0/1,000 (39,6/1,000 urban and 46,9/1,000 rural; crude death rate was: 18,1/1,000 (15,7/1,000 urban and 18,4/1,000 rural); population growth rate: 2,9 totally (4,0 urban and 2,9 rural); total fertility rate: 6,8 (5,8 urban and 6,9 rural); infant mortality rate: 139/1,000 (122/1,000 urban and 141/1,000 rural) and expectation of life at birth 48,5 (52,9 urban and 48,0 rural) (WPE, 1987). As a comparison could be mentioned that infant mortality was around 155/1,000 in 1963-1971 and contemporary life expectancy for males 45 years and for females 40-41 years (MoH, 1980).

The proportion of young people (below 30 years of age) was in 1974: 69,9%, based upon MoH, 1980 and in 1984 as presented below (based upon CSO, 1985). Such figures are of interest when discussing our topic.

Age distribution of population 1988 as estimated:

	Male	Female	Total
0-4	4 166 939	4 215 782	8 382 721
5-9	3 856 675	3 808 312	7 664 987
10-14	3 087 877	2 876 200	5 964 077
15-19	2 212 077	2 075 472	4 287 549
20-24	1 626 229	1 786 176	3 412 405
25-29	1 363 417	1 702 475	3 065 892
30-34	1 275 534	1 505 699	2 781 233
35-39	1 173 081	1 292 121	2 465 202
40-44	1 036 187	1 075 083	2 111 270
45-49	861 723	847 356	1 709 079
50-54	719 338	666 884	1 386 222
55-59	601 419	520 212	1 121 631
60-64	516 621	428 010	944 631
65-69	385 872	315 348	701 220
70-74	287 826	211 005	498 831
75-79	192 509	144 655	337 164
80 +	267 429	203 761	471 190

Fig 1.

Of specific interest for this meeting is the "Rural Labour Force Survey" (CSO, 1985), as it introduces information about: population characteristics, population size, household size and composition, age distribution, migration, marital status and education, based upon the census in 1984 (CSO). Some characteristics of Ethiopian productive activities are presented:

> "Productive work (as dealt with in the survey) was defined as work that is used in the production of goods or services, which will be sold in the market or are consumed in the household. Ploughing, weeding, harvesting, collection of farm produce, threshing, herding cattle, weaving (for sale), blacksmithing, pottery making et cetera were examples of productive work.
>
> Cooking food, collecting fire wood or water for cooking or personal use, mending of roof of a house or its fence were not considered as productive.."
>
> (CSO, 1985:36-42).

Time does not allow us to further discuss the many statistics and analyses which are available. "The Report on the Rural Health Survey, 1982/83" (CSO, 1985); "Time Series Data on Area, Production and Yield of Major Crops, 1979-86" (CSO, 1987) and "Transport and Communication Statistics" (CSO, 1987) give background material for deeper analyses related to production.

From Feudal Rule to a Democratic Republic.

It is well known that Ethiopia has had a long feudal rule, and all historical documentation about that time has been left aside. The revolution (1974), which had a strong relationship to education as many students at the university and elsewhere were involved, resulted in an overthrow of the feudal era and the take-over by the Dergue and PMAC under the leadership of Chairman Mengistu Hailemariam. The politics and economics of this era are well described e.g. by Schwab (1985).

Ethiopia, though, has been looking forward to civilian rule and in 1987 it was proclaimed "The People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE)". The first president is Mengistu Hailemariam and its ruling body is the National Assembly (Shengo), for which the delegates have been elected to represent all the different groups and workers in Ethiopia (see also PDRE, 1987). Many preparations have been made for this change, such as a popular discussion of the new constitution, adopted and confirmed in 1987. Its content was presented to all local associations and comments and changes were made accordingly.

Already during the time between 1974-1987 many important events had taken place, such as the land reform (1975), the nationalization of the major means of production and distribution (1975), the organization of Ethiopian peasantry and inauguration of the All-Ethiopia Peasant Associations (PAs, in 1978), the establishment of Revolutionary Youth Associations (REYA in 1980) and of Revolutionary Women's Association (REWA in 1980). Also Urban Dwellers' Associations (UDAs) were formed (in 1977). All these associations are of importance as they constitute the backbone of the administrative apparatus, through which information is disseminated and demands are expressed. Rahmato (1984) and Woube (1986) have well described their structure, based upon the conditions before 1987. The structure remains in the new administration, only with the exclusion of most district (woreda) levels, which have been altered to provincial (awradja) levels. The new constitution of 1987 was introduced and discussed at all these levels.

The Administrative Apparatus.

From September 1987 the administrative apparatus of Ethiopia has changed from the former 14 regions to a new structure. The preparatory work for this re-administration has been carried out by the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities. The new structure has taken into account the question of ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Special attention has been paid to Eritrea, the northernmost province, which has been declared to have special autonomous status. In all, five regions (Eritrea, Tigray, Assab, Diredawa and Ogaden) have been declared as autonomous regions with their own responsibilities for e.g. health and education. They have their own assemblies (shengos), elected from their own people, and which have a kind of federal responsibility towards Ethiopia as a whole (PDRE, 1987:263).

The other, former regions have been re-structured into 24 administrative regions, under the National Assembly (Shengo): Northern Gondar, Southern Gondar, Northern Wollo, Southern Wollo, Eastern Gojjam, Western Gojjam, Metekel, Assosa, Wellega, Northern Shewa, Addis Ababa, Western Shewa, Southern Shewa, Western Hararge, Eastern Hararge, Arsi, Bale, Gambella,

Illubabor, Keffa, Gamugofa, Sidamo, Omo and Borena (Ibid, 1987:264-5).

The mass-organizations are represented both at regional, provincial and local (kebelle) level and have a certain amount of self-government and responsibilities, as for example for the building of schools and health services. They are further combined in service cooperatives, so that some peasants' or urban dwellers' associations (PAs, UDAs) can make combined efforts as to such services. Many local decisions are made and minor disputes are settled at this level instead of bringing them to provincial courts. Also many administrative decisions are taken at this level in accordance with regional and national legislations. In all cases opinions are also heard from Youth's and Women's Associations (REYAs, REWAs). Such a decentralization plays an important role in planning for the future, and thus greatly in educational planning.

A Multi-Ethnic Society.

Ethiopia is a conglomeration of many different ethnic groups, which are estimated to be more than 70 in number. This means a variety of cultural customs and languages. Many studies have been made about the culture of Ethiopia, some of them related in my own thesis (1988, in progress). The bibliographical work for the study has lead through many different studies, of which could be mentioned works by Pankhurst S (op cit), Pankhurst R (op cit), Ullendorff (1973), Lipsky (1967), Trimingham (1952), Levine (1972, 1974) and Abir (1968).

Languages have been in focus for special studies, such as by Bender et al (1976) and a multitude of works by Wolf Leslau. Many detailed studies in certain parts of Ethiopia have also been conducted, such as by Shack (1966), Haberland (1965), Messing (1957) et cetera. Many studies are conducted at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, at the University of Addis Ababa, and many Ethiopian scholars have documented special studies.

The diversity of ethnic groups is one of the difficulties that Ethiopia faces, especially as concerns education. Special emphasis has therefore been paid to language questions in the literacy campaign, which has been conducted in 15 languages (Amharic, Oromigna, Tigrigna, Somaligna, Hadiyigna, Wolaitigna, Kembatigna, Gediogna, Tigre, Kunamigna, Sidamigna, Siltigna, Afarigna, Sahogna and Kefamochigna). Up to January 1987 there have been 16 rounds of the literacy campaign, covering about 92 percent of the population. The percentage of illiterates was in 1974: 93 percent and is at present between 37-34 percent (NLCCC, 1987). Amharic is according to the constitution (1987:69, article 116) proclaimed to be the state language.

Culture and Society.

Culture is a wide concept and for this paper I have borrowed a definition by Helman (1985), who in his turn has based his definition upon Tylor (1871): "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (the definition is found in Leach, 1982:38-39). As for Ethiopia, which is a vast country, the customs and habits differ much from north to south and west to east. Planning, e.g. for education and

rural development, thus has to be adjusted accordingly. The northern part of Ethiopia is, for example, heavily struck by drought and famine, and erosion is terrible. The land is too damaged for any type of cultivation, hence daily living has become impossible for the inhabitants.

These events are well known to us, but less is known though about the internal efforts to handle the problems. It is also well known that there are several internal conflicts and a civil war, which make it even more difficult. Survival questions have, in these areas, become the first crucial issue, education cannot be carried out as planned and survival has become more important than cultural customs and habits. The strong attachment to cultural customs within certain groups, though, has been one reason for resistance to the resettlement program, which has been much criticized. In Ethiopia's campaign against famine it has become a necessity, even if many problems are related to it.

The villagization program is a trial to bring people together in planned villages, instead of living in hamlets. One reason has been that people could have better access to basic facilities, like schools, health posts, mills, water wells et cetera. It has travelled through many difficulties, people have rather preferred to live in their inherited areas and there has also been a shortage of wood for building houses. Certain areas have had specific problems, such as those where coffee is cultivated (Southern and Western). Different opinions are prevalent from those absolutely opposing the program to those who have fully adopted the policy. Differences are seen among ethnic groups, as for example in Western Ethiopia. Ideological/political control is another point of view that has been criticized. As concerns education, special attention has been paid to schooling of drought victims (MoE, 1985).

Cultural customs include a variety of areas, such as health habits, food habits, building strategies, cultivation of different crops, trado-medical customs, et cetera. Marriage patterns differ in Ethiopia, which affect girls' participation in education. Harmful customs exist and differ, for example female circumcision and local operations, which have an effect upon the health and mortality of women and children. More about these customs is found in Negussie (1988, op.cit).

When looking upon culture in a society, here Ethiopia, it is important to identify beneficial customs and harmful ones and to deal with them. It is, though, crucial to see them in relation to the culture and see their role in the original culture. Female circumcision has, for example belonged to the reproductive system in many African countries (Ahlberg, 1988). Fertility regulation has also to be seen in relation to each country's opinion about it. In the traditional societies there are many indigenous rules related to such questions, which are broken up at migration to urban areas. The fertility rate can therefore sometimes even increase. Modern and traditional sexual roles have become conflicting, which has often resulted in un-wanted pregnancies among adolescents. The common opinion that many children are wanted, as they are a security for the family, that they constitute an important force of labor in the society, that they raise the status of the family and that they are needed as infant and child mortality is high, are questions which must be taken into account. Somebody said that "it is necessary to bear three times as many children as I want, as many of them die" is a statement to be considered. It is also related to maternal

deaths. Poverty and shortage of food are other important issues.

Living Conditions.

Two different aspects need to be taken into account: first the large proportion of people living in rural areas (often estimated to be around 80% of the population) and secondly, those who have migrated to urban or semi-urban areas. Migration itself has had its own studies, one of which has been carried out by Bjeren (1985). As mentioned many new problems occur for those who leave the old cultural customs and surroundings and many come into vulnerable stages. Women, for example, have often had to earn their living through beer-brewing and prostitution.

For this paper the wide concern of urban life and problems, as well as causes of urbanization, are left aside. It is, though, a very important issue to deal with and is also much related to production.

The living conditions in rural areas in Ethiopia are, as in many African countries, very hard. One cause is poverty, another the population increase, a third the large live-stock, a fourth scarce access to water, grain grinding mills and health facilities. Together they result in a harsh life for people living in rural and remote areas. It is striking that people have a great deal of knowledge about how to deal with certain matters, be it health matters or agriculture, but distances and lack of means of transportation are hindrances which are of utmost importance for people.

Rural development is, thus, for people living in such areas, a question of getting access to basic needs, such as food, water and health care. If these needs are dealt with, education also comes into focus. During my field periods in Southern Shewa, I have observed many cases of shortage of the most needed things, such as grain and water, and many school-children had to withdraw from school, because of lack of food. In one junior secondary school, there were around 1,200 students in 1982-83, but during the drought period in 1984, there was a decline in enrolment to around 750 students, due to food shortage and poverty. One deciliter of corn had sometimes to be sufficient for one male as a breakfast, combined with one or two small cups of coffee. The main meal consisted of small bread and kale stew. Women and children had an even less amount.

Many discussions revealed people's need for water wells and grain grinding mills. Women especially commented about their difficulties in walking long distances for grinding grain and fetching water. Already weakened through food-shortage, their health became hazardously affected and in the case of young women it affected their chances of education, both as concerns entrance to schools, daily attendance in classes, school performance, "drop-out" rates and continuation of education. Time was an important factor, as half a day could be occupied with fetching water and carrying grain to mills.

Also male children had problems, as many of them had to herd cattle and bring cattle to places with water, which had become more and more scarce and also at very long distances. Walking many kilometres every third day for "watering" cattle was common and affected also these boys' chances of education. The role of water in rural development has been discussed in many seminars,

one of them held in Uppsala in 1980 and reported about by Falkenmark (1982). SIDA has paid much attention to water-related problems, be it small projects like the "Dodota"-project (Tafari et Jere, 1984) or cases studies referring to the entire Ethiopian situation (Utrikesdepartementet, 1986; Cohen, 1987).

Gender in Rural Development.

Some difficulties concerning both males and females have already been pointed out. In the case of Ethiopia, the land-reform has had a positive effect upon rural development, as people have become freed from tenancy and can cultivate their own lots. Men's work tasks have increased in one way, as they have got more official work to do, as for example in the peasants' organizations at local (kebelle) level as well as at the district (woreda) or provincial (awradja) levels. Their farming work has had to be carried out at the same time. Failures of rainfalls, irregular rainfalls or rainfalls in the wrong season have heavily affected their work, so that crops have failed or become small in size, hence not enough for food or sale. Technical development has usually not reached rural areas, hence there is a greater need for fertilizers and better agricultural tools. The high demand for education has also put pressure on men's income, even if education as such is free. Clothing, transport and purchasing of stationery material for school-children has become a burden for people. Many fathers have also commented upon the problem for a child to get a job after its education, which affected the father's economy as he either had to bring the child home again, or had to support him also after education.

Women had their own problems, often related to health, nutrition and clothing. Rural development is also closely linked to health and feeding of children, e.g. breast-feeding, as well as to home-economics. Further, women have much responsibility for health care in rural society, and discuss such problems very much, as for example the long distances to health care services for their families. Their work-load is heavy and often their health status is weak and their nutritional status low. Maternal deaths caused by multiple pregnancies is a threat to the families.

Many different problems are related to agriculture. Ethiopia has carried out many attempts to deal with this problem. A special seminar was, for example, held in Awassa in 1983, during which women's role in agriculture was much discussed. REWA (women's associations) play also an important role in preparing for better life-conditions for women.

The heavy work-load for women is emphasized in many studies, and as it is discussed within many disciplines, there have been attempts of integrated efforts, initiated from the Curriculum Department at the Ministry of Education (1987). Further, much work concerning rural development for women is pointed out in material used in the literacy campaigns, which focus upon health, sanitation, nutrition, water et cetera.

Gender roles still play a great role in rural societies, and much basic work is carried out by women. In spite of that, basic, modern technologies have not been accessible to them, nor fertilizers for their small garden cultivation, nor water wells. As a result of the droughts, grazing has become a problem, hence cattle have become affected and thereby milk and milk-products. Handling of such products belongs to women's responsibilities,

and decline of such production has affected both economy, health and nutrition of their families.

The Role of Education.

The role of education in rural development relates to several areas of education, in particular to primary education and non-formal education. This paper will only focus upon a few points of importance. First, there is much emphasis upon questions related to development, such as teaching about sanitation and nutrition. Home-economics is a special subject, which includes many aspects also related to health. "Health" is mostly covered under subjects like science, biology and home-ecomomics, and questions about e.g. clean water and environmental health are emphasized. Studies have been conducted, such as the one reported by Sjöström (1986), which has focused especially upon effects of primary schooling in rural Ethiopia (the case of Saya Debir). Low female enrolment was underscored.

Non-formal education has reached many in rural areas, and it was observed that advice given in such teaching had resulted in changes in customs and progress in development. The literacy campaign has certainly played a role of utmost importance, as material for literacy classes is directed towards development in general. Such material has been carefully prepared, and translated into vernacular languages. There were many difficulties in carrying out such translation work, concepts had to be explained and formed. Usually two groups of translaters were working side by side, one cross-checking the other so as to escape errors. During the fieldwork for my own study, many opportunities to observe literacy classes in rural areas have occurred.

The President, Mengistu Hailemariam (1987) has underscored some issues related to education. As regards child care, there is an emphasis upon expansion of kindergartens, which prior to the revolution were only 77 and which have expanded to 743 (1987). Necessary measures have been undertaken to train qualified teachers for kindergartens. A study visit has been paid to their training centre, and it was observed that it was a very creative teaching institute, but that it needed much financial support. The president has further presented an overview of all types of education and its importance for production and life. "In line with the objective of involving public participation in the administration of education, committees have been set up in all schools up to the senior secondary level and are making significant contributions which facilitate the teaching-learning process".. (Hailemariam, 1987:93). Such administration has been closely observed during the implementation of a rural development project in Southern Shewa (Shone area), in which the schools are involved. The school-committees are certainly well anchored among the community members and the different mass organizations.

It has also been observed that there is a large increase in the establishment of schools in rural areas. Only 25 years ago, many rural areas had no primary schools, which meant that many children had no access at all, and the few who could get a place in a school elsewhere, had to find living places in a strange area, and had to provide themselves with food. Today many communities have established their own schools and this is one cause of the large increase of students enroled in education, especially primary education. For example, the number of students

in primary education were in 1974/75: 957,301 students and 1985/86: 2,448,778 students. Females, though, count for a smaller proportion: 305,408 in 1974/75 and 957,763 in 1985/86 (WPE, 1987:105). The number of schools has during the same periods increased from 3,196 to 7,900 for grades 1-6; from 507 to 964 for grades 7-8 and from 124 to 245 for grades 9-12 (ibid, p 107). Most schools are found in Shewa, Wellega, Eritrea, Addis Ababa and Hararge regions.

This paper has not discussed the many detailed types of education, which are ongoing. It should be noted, though, that Ethiopia has been granted several awards for its successful literacy campaigns. The role of mass media education is also of utmost importance, with the well developed net of local radio-stations and education through them. More radio-receivers, though, are needed, as a supplement to the reading material in reading rooms (nebab bet) and in the primary schools. If every community had access to some radio receivers, effects of non-formal education could be somewhat explosive. People are very skilled in memorization and education once heard is taken into account and discussed in many informal groups among rural people.

Rural Development, a Challenge for Educators.

It has only been possible to point out some important "ingredients" in rural development. Education is of great importance in promoting rural development and it is a challenge for us as educators to be involved in such work. It is not easy to find simple solutions to questions, it has to remembered that sectors are closely linked together and to society as a whole. Political and national planning may have many promising goals, but economy might be a hindrance. In countries where many sub-cultures exist, there are also different needs. In a country such as Ethiopia, which has a climate which differs in south and north, west and east as well as in the centre versus the peripheral areas, there are many problems to be solved. If peace can be obtained, Ethiopia will certainly have embarked on a new path in trying to solve such problems, especially by decentralization of its administrative apparatus. As regions become more responsible for their affairs, there is promising basis. It needs, though, a combined effort nationally and internationally. What can we as educational researchers learn and what can we contribute?

Some issues for our discussion:

1. A discussion about how production is defined, as concerns men and women in rural societies?

2. Education in rural areas (access, enrolment, curricula, teachers), as well as focus upon formal, non-formal and informal education?

3. A discussion about education and production, seen in a societal perspective (with focus upon political, economic and social/cultural dimensions)?

4. Cultural differences in rural development within a country and between countries?

5. Men and women in rural development?

6. The role of education as an agent for rural development?

7. Cross-disciplinary themes in development studies? How much are, for examples, educational and agricultural efforts integrated?

8. The role of donor agencies? How much are development programs integrated between different sectors, such as agriculture, education, health et cetera?

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